Council Highlights: October 2002

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COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year.

This issue covers the months of July and October 2002.

Attendance at Ontario Universities' Fair increases by over 60%

The sixth annual Ontario Universities' Fair, held this year at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on September 27, 28 and 29, was attended by an estimated 75,000 people, up by more than 60% from last year's then-record turnout of 47,000. All of Ontario's universities as well as the Ontario College of Art & Design, the Royal Military College of Canada and the newly established University of Ontario Institute of Technology were represented at the fair.

At each university booth, admissions, student services, academic and student representatives made themselves available to high school students and their parents to provide information and answer questions. The institutions also provided record numbers of take-away information and material on their undergraduate programs, on average handing out 40,000 brochures per university. Several institutions, in fact, required the delivery of more brochures to cover the tremendous demand by both students and parents. In addition, each institution presented several information sessions on available programs, admission requirements and campus life throughout the course of the three-day, no-cost event.

The fair, which was chaired by Charmaine Hack of Ryerson University and Doug Leeies of the University of Toronto, was organized by the Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison as part of the University Information Program.

Getting the message out for double cohort students

The Ontario Universities' Fair provided a significant opportunity for universities to "get their message out" to applicants and their parents about the double cohort admissions cycle that is underway. The University Information Program will ensure that secondary school students province-wide will be able to hear from university liaison officials and review quality informational publications detailing the unique strengths of each Ontario university and the opportunities that are available to qualified applicants.

For its part, the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) has helped to produce and disseminate some of the wealth of information about university admission and application issues to Ontario applicants and beyond:

- Over 300,000 copies of the 148-page reference document *INFO* magazine have now been distributed to all Ontario secondary schools and a host of other agencies.
- COU's special double cohort issue of *The Knowledge Track* has been distributed to all secondary schools and to tens of thousands of visitors to the recent fair.
- A total of 187,000 English and French admission application booklets, covering both the on-line and hard-copy application processes, are now on their way to schools.
- Over 10,000 *In the Loop* booklets and counsellor's manuals have been distributed to counsellors throughout the province.
- Personal Identification Access security vouchers used to access the on-line application will

soon be printed for up to 225,000 secondary school students.

Naturally, all OUAC publications are available on the Centre's web site (www.ouac.on.ca), which was visited by over 600,000 guests last application cycle. In addition, OUAC plans on responding to almost 30,000 requests for application materials from foreign countries this year on top of the thousands of forms sent to other provinces.

The Centre has estimated that at least 105,000 students will apply for university admission in 2003, and of these over 80% are expected to apply via the web.

Secondary schools on board with OUAC's on-line application process

Last year, OUAC successfully tested its Secondary School On-Line Application (SSOLA) – a university admission application process for Ontario secondary school students – with seven school boards across the province. The new web-based application was developed to ensure that OUAC is able to process, within the same time frame as the current cycle, the large increase in applications and data resulting from the double cohort. Following the pilot project, SSOLA has been further fine-tuned, and communications with Ontario secondary school counsellors earlier this year indicate that 74% of the approximately 900 Ontario secondary schools have registered with the Centre to permit their students to apply on line. It is expected that 80% of actual applicants will apply via this efficient and user-friendly process.

OUAC staff have scheduled 25 information sessions around the province for counsellors who want to review the SSOLA process first-hand.

Ontario universities represented during Queen's visit to Exhibition Place

On October 9, 2002, COU participated in the Festival of Ontario, an exhibit of approximately 100 organizations representing the province's diverse sectors, that was organized in honour of the Queen's Golden Jubilee tour of Canada and that coincided with her visit to Toronto. The focus of the COU display was the surge in enrolment and the SuperBuild program, the largest capital investment in Ontario's colleges and universities in over 30 years that will help to ensure places for qualified and motivated students on university campuses.

Over 6,000 guests and exhibitors were on hand to welcome Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh. Council was pleased to welcome several guests to its exhibit, including Minister Dianne Cunningham, Deputy Minister Kevin Costante and Assistant Deputy Minister Jessica Hill from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, as well as MPPs and political aids. Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Official Opposition, also stopped by for a chat.

Former Chair of Council receives Smith Award

At a dinner held in Toronto on October 17, 2002, the second annual David C. Smith Award for Significant Contribution to Scholarship and Policy on Higher Education in Canada was presented to J. Robert S. Prichard, President and CEO of the Torstar Media Group, former President of the University of Toronto and former Chair of the Council of Ontario Universities.

The David C. Smith Award celebrates the distinguished contributions that the late Dr. Smith made to scholarship and policy in higher education. To further broaden awareness of issues in higher education and of the relationships between public policy and higher education, each year's recipient is invited to deliver a lecture on a subject related to the theme of the award. At this year's dinner, following the presentation of the award by Rev. Mary Smith (Dr. Smith's widow), Mr. Prichard delivered a lecture on the changing policy landscape of postsecondary education.

The dinner was also attended by Reverend Smith's daughter Monica and son-in-law Brad Martin, government representatives, special guests and members of Council.

Awards for Excellence in Teaching with Technology presented

On October 18, 2002, a special luncheon was held to honour the first winners of the OPAS Awards for Excellence in Teaching with Technology. The first award recognizes a program, course or module designed for university students; the second recognizes an educational product designed specifically for people in the workforce.

The recipient of the first award, sponsored by CGI Group Inc., was Dr. William Ralph of Brock University for his undergraduate course, Journey through Calculus. The winner of the second award, sponsored by IBM, was Dr. John Burton of the University of Guelph, in partnership with the Office of Open Learning and the Equine Research Centre, for the centre's Equine Science Certificate Program. Each award is valued at $7,500.

The event, which was held at the University Club in Toronto, was attended by several Executive Heads and colleagues, members of the OPAS Board of Directors, and invited representatives from the business and government communities. The awards are part of OPAS's ongoing commitment to promoting the use of learning technologies among university faculty.

Major new awards given to women's health scholars

Eight women's health scholars are the recipients of a major new awards endowment by the Ontario Women's Health Council to advance various studies of female health needs. The council has established a $6 million endowment "to build a mass of women's health scholars," says Jane Pepino, a Toronto lawyer and women's health advocate who chairs the council.

The first recipients of the awards are Suzanne Cadarette, University of Toronto; Valerija Rac-Borcic, University of Toronto; Lori Ross, University of Toronto; Alison Shea, McMaster University; Angela Stewart, University of Ottawa; Ayse Uskul, York University; Marianne van den Heuvel, University of Guelph; and Shannon Zaitsoff, University of Windsor.

The council had already worked at establishing university chairs in women's health but determined that scholarship had to be supported at the earlier graduate levels as well to help ensure that more individuals were coming up from the ranks. Prizes of $5,000 and grants of up to $50,000 can go toward tuition fees, office space and other research-related expenses for academics engaged in women's health concerns.

OPAS Visionary Seminar features CEO of TD Bank Financial Group

On November 25, 2002, OPAS will present its 2002 Visionary Award to Charles Baillie, Chair and CEO of TD Bank Financial Group. Mr. Baillie will be presented the award at Queen's University, where he also serves as Chancellor. A highly respected business leader, Mr. Baillie will share his insights on the outlook for his industry and the Canadian economy.

This year's seminar is the sixth in a series of Visionary Seminars presented by OPAS and its university partners. The seminars enable universities across the province to build new relationships with local business leaders, as well as showcase their capabilities in addressing the human and intellectual capital needs of Canadian companies. Each seminar spotlights a major Canadian industry, shares insight into future directions, and highlights the skills graduates will need to secure employment in that sector.

The November seminar, which will be attended by an in-house audience of Queen's faculty, students and local business leaders, will be broadcast live to approximately 25 universities and colleges across Canada via satellite. The award presentation and speech will also be captured by a simultaneous webcast, which will be viewable at the OPAS web site (www.opas-partnerships.com). Bell Canada, an OPAS partner, will sponsor the satellite broadcast and webcast.

Past Visionary Seminars have featured Mike Lazaridis, President and co-CEO of Research In

Motion (RIM); John Cleghorn, then Chair and CEO of Royal Bank of Canada; John Sheridan, then President of Bell Ontario; Jean Monty, then Vice-Chair and CEO of Nortel; and Ted Rogers, CEO of Rogers Communications.

Summer Institute on Learning Technologies

From August 13 to 15, 2002, OPAS and its industry partners presented the fourth annual Summer Institute on Learning Technologies at IBM's new Software Lab in Markham, Ontario. Don Tapscott, internationally known author, speaker and consultant on business strategy and organizational transformation, was the Institute's keynote speaker. Mr. Tapscott's presentation examined information technology trends and issues that are affecting our social, cultural and economic development. Approximately 200 invited guests from the business, government and university communities attended the keynote session. Over 30 faculty members selected by their respective vice-presidents academic attended the three-day Institute, which focused on new developments, exchanging best practices and shaping new joint initiatives.

New director appointed to MTCU's Universities Branch

Effective July 29, 2002, Kevin French assumed the role of Director of the Universities Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). Prior to his position at MTCU, he served the Cabinet Office administering the issues management and liaison role with the Walkerton Public Inquiry. He was also director of both the Corporate Policy Branch at the Management Board Secretariat and the Finance and Administration Branch of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Mr. French holds an honours bachelor's degree from the University of Western Ontario and a master's degree in public administration from Queen's University.

Mr. French succeeds Jamie Mackay, who assumed the role of Vice-President of Policy and Analysis at COU.

Task Force on Student Interuniversity Athletics established

The Task Force on Student Interuniversity Athletics, which reports to the COU Ontario Commission on Interuniversity Athletics, was recently established to examine common sports issues including awards for student athletes among Ontario University Athletics (OUA) institutions. The Task Force, which is chaired by Dr. Bill Leggett, Principal of Queen's University, will consider factors that affect the competitive strengths of OUA teams, consult with stakeholders and review best practices in other jurisdictions. A report of the findings will be submitted to Council in the spring of 2003.

Guidelines underway by Working Group on Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001 requires that the province, municipalities and broader public sector make their buildings, programs and services more accessible to persons with disabilities to improve access and opportunities. The preparation of annual plans must address the "identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the organization's by-laws, if any, and in its policies, programs, practices and services." Ontario universities, through the COU Working Group on Ontarians with Disabilities Act, are assessing the new law's implications and developing guidelines and checklists that institutions could use in preparing their individual accessibility plans. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship designed and introduced the act, which received royal assent on December 13, 2001.

Member updates

- Dr. Ross Paul was re-appointed to his second six-year term as President of the University of Windsor.

- Dr. David Marshall, President of Nipissing University, was awarded the 2002 Community

Builder of the Year by the Northgate Square Shopping Centre. This is the second year of the presentation of the award, which recognizes North Bay citizens who have contributed to the community's growth and prosperity. The first award recipient was former premier Mike Harris.

- November 2, 2002 is the date of the official installation of Dr. Judith Woodsworth as President of Laurentian University. Dr. Woodsworth succeeds Dr. Hermann Falter.

First cycle of undergraduate program review audits near completion

The series of audits of institutional processes for undergraduate program reviews now enters the seventh and last year of its first cycle. With Guelph, McMaster and Wilfrid Laurier slated for audits in 2002-2003, all 17 of Ontario's publicly funded universities will have been audited according to the *Audit Guidelines* established by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). In preparation for the second cycle, OCAV plans to review the *Audit Guidelines* later this year.

Since the last update, OCAV has formally received the auditors' report for Ryerson and the Trent report. The auditors have met to discuss their findings and the shape of the report for the Toronto audit, and a draft has been completed. A follow-up meeting on the Laurentian audit has been arranged for the last week of October, and one on Waterloo's audit will be scheduled for later this year. Universities are required to respond within one year following the audit, and Nipissing's report confirms that their policies have been amended in accordance with the auditors' recommendations.

In May 2002, representatives from almost all Ontario universities participated in a Best Practices Workshop, which was organized and hosted by York University. The workshop focused on the practical aspects of conducting program reviews and preparing for the undergraduate program review audit, and provided ample opportunity for discussion of problems and solutions.

OCAV appointed an additional auditor to the roster: Dr. Michael Charles, who is Dean Emeritus of the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto. He joins Dr. Richard Barham (Guelph – retired); Dr. James Good (Western – retired); Dr. Ross Rudolph (York); Dr. Michael Yovanovich (Waterloo – retired); and Dr. Alice Baumgart (Queen's – retired) who was re-appointed to another term. With six auditors on the roster, the scheduling of audits has been made easier. Normally a team of three auditors conducts each audit.

As the new Chair of OCAV, Dr. Rowland Smith (Wilfrid Laurier) automatically succeeds Dr. Greg Moran (Western) as Chair of the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC), the body that oversees, on behalf of OCAV, the conduct of the audits. Dr. Moran was elected by OCAV to continue as a member of UPRAC.

2002 Edition of *COU Briefing Notes* published

COU recently published the 2002 edition of the *COU Briefing Notes*, an overview of key issues and facts concerning Ontario universities. The briefing book is designed to provide background information and to complement existing institutional briefing books on Ontario university issues for Council members and university governing bodies. It will be available on COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca) by the end of October.